IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for polishing a wafer comprising the steps of:

holding a wafer on a rotatable wafer holding plate; [[and]]

providing a rotatable table;

adhering a polishing cloth to said rotatable table;

supplying a polishing agent containing an alkaline solution to said polishing cloth, said alkaline solution containing an organic base or a salt thereof and silica having essentially spherical particles;

polishing a surface of said wafer with said polishing cloth by placing said polishing cloth with said polishing agent in contact with said surface of said wafer;

controlling pH of said polishing agent in a pH value range level from 10 to 13, wherein Na_2CO_3 is used for pH adjustment of said alkaline solution

~~polishing a surface of the wafer being in contact with a polishing cloth adhered on a rotatable table in such a state that a polishing agent is supplied onto the polishing cloth, wherein the polishing agent is an alkaline solution which contains silica having particles each in the shape of almost an sphere as a main component and further an organic base or a salt thereof.~~

2. (Currently Amended) A method for polishing a wafer comprising the steps of:

holding a wafer on a rotatable wafer holding plate; and

polishing a surface of the wafer being in contact with a polishing cloth adhered on a rotatable table in such a state that a polishing agent is supplied onto the polishing cloth, wherein

the polishing agent is an alkaline solution which contains silica, said silica being essentially uniformly dispersed in said alkaline solution ~~almost uniformly~~, the silica having particles each essentially in the shape of ~~almost an~~ a sphere and an average particle diameter of ~~12 nm or less~~ 5 to 10 nm.

3. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 2, wherein the polishing agent is an alkaline solution which contains [[the]] a concentration of silica ~~as a main component~~ in a range of 2 to 20 wt % and further an organic base or a salt thereof.

4. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the organic base or the salt thereof is a quaternary ammonium hydroxide.

5 - 8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 4, wherein the quaternary ammonium hydroxide is tetramethyl ammonium hydroxide.

10. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein amount of the organic base or the salt thereof ~~is added up to~~ does not exceed a predetermined dissolution limit of the polishing agent in use.

11. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the wafer is a silicon wafer.

12. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, further comprising ~~which is performed~~ polishing said surface of said wafer with [[in]] a rough polishing step (a primary polishing step and a secondary polishing step) in a mirror polishing process.

13. (Original) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 12, wherein the rough polishing step is the second polishing step.

14. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the silica is used at a concentration in the range of from 2 to 20 wt %.

15. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the polishing cloth is of an unwoven cloth type.

16. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein hardness (Asker C hardness) of the polishing cloth is 50 or more.

17. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1,

wherein stock removal of the wafer is 1 μm or more.

18. (New) A method for polishing a wafer comprising the steps of:

holding a wafer on a rotatable wafer holding plate;

providing a rotatable table;

connecting a polishing cloth to said rotatable table;

supplying a polishing agent containing an alkaline solution to said polishing cloth, said alkaline solution containing an organic base or a salt thereof and silica having essentially spherical particles;

providing a means for holding said polishing agent;

polishing a surface of said wafer with said polishing cloth by placing said polishing cloth in contact with said surface of said wafer;

collecting excess polishing agent after polishing said wafer with said polishing agent;

supplying said excess polishing agent to said means for holding said polishing agent, said excess polishing agent mixing with existing polishing agent contained in said holding means to form a polishing agent mixture;

adjusting pH level of said polishing agent mixture; and

supplying said polishing agent mixture to said polishing cloth.

19. (New) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18, wherein the silica is used at a concentration in the range of from 5 to 80 wt % of silica.

20. (New) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18, wherein the polishing cloth is of an unwoven cloth type.

21. (New) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18, wherein the silica is used at a concentration in the range of from 5 to 80 wt % of silica.

22. (New) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18, wherein hardness (Asker C hardness) of the polishing cloth is 50 or more.

23. (New) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18, wherein amount of the organic base or the salt thereof does not exceed a predetermined dissolution limit of the polishing agent in use.

24. (New) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18, wherein:

the organic base or the salt thereof is a quaternary ammonium hydroxide;

pH of said polishing agent is maintained in a pH value range level from 10 to 13; and

Na_2CO_3 is used for pH adjustment of said alkaline solution.